



NSW **craft**matters

the newsletter of craft nsw

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profile

Margot Alexander

glass artist

I was always drawing and making things whilst growing up that it was no surprise that I ended up at art school.

I had graduated from Sydney College of the Arts (majoring in Jewellery and a minor in glass) when Maureen Cahill, our lecturer in glass, offered us an exhibition in her gallery - suddenly I was firing three kilns a day instead of once a month.

It was very exciting and I was hooked!

I eventually ended up at the Studioshop in Neutral Bay, which was just the right environment as it housed two other artists (doing ceramics, weaving and basketry), not to mention a gallery!

The potter was a hand builder and was excellent with colour and shape.

We would talk endlessly about our work, get lots of encouragement and sell at the same time.

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Craft Matters features informative snips, clips, tips and images about craft. If you or your organisation have a craft event of any kind in NSW, an image or a craft story, submit it for free inclusion in future issues of Craft Matters. [Please email your interest](#). And of course, your suggestions and feedback are always welcome.

The Society of Arts and Crafts of NSW is a not-for-profit organisation formed in 1906, to encourage and promote arts and crafts, encourage the use of Australian culture, materials and motif in work and design and provide opportunities for the exhibition and sale of work of members and others. [visit our website](#).

Margot Alexander

continued



Later I got involved in the Craft Show, met new customers, joined the North Shore Craft Group and finally the Society of Arts and Crafts of NSW in Sydney.

I take my inspiration mostly from nature. I walk in the bush and along the coast taking lots of photographs. I'm inspired by the colour, shape and movement of the scene around me - by the jutting rocks, the roaring

surf, the colour of water and texture of the foliage.

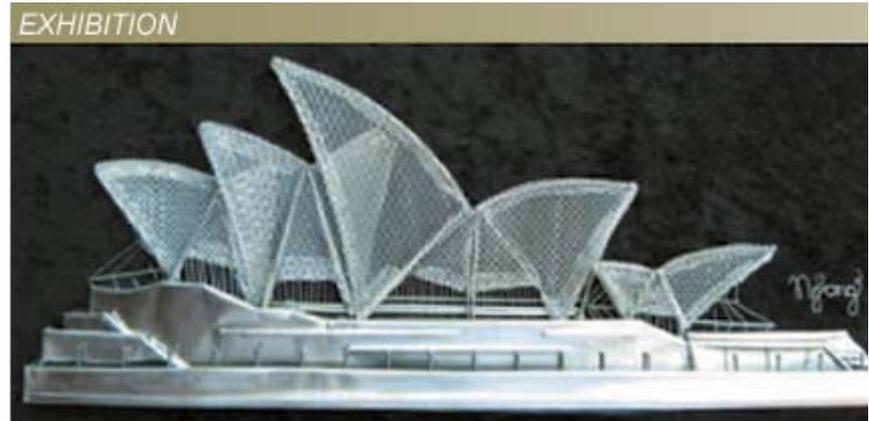
I'm a kiln worker, which involves fusing, slumping and casting. I also have lamp working facilities, a sandblaster, 4 kilns and 2 grinders. I just love my tools!

Margot Alexander

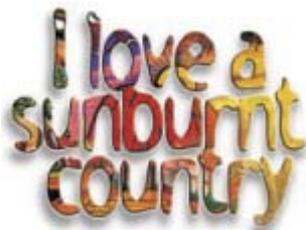
Editor's note: Margot was a finalist at the prestigious Ranamok Glass Prize in 2010.



Penelope Wood Mixed media sculpture



Natalie Fong Wire sculpture



Society members were asked to submit work inspired by the 2nd verse of Dorothea Mackellar's famous poem (you know, the one that goes 'I love a sunburnt country, a land of sweeping plains...') to start off their exhibition year.

Shown here is a small sampling of their response to the challenge. They will follow up with another exhibition in March with work inspired by the 3rd verse - 'A Stark White Ring-barked Forest'



Maret Kalmar Brooch, sterling silver, bone



The more things change

Throughout last year, we asked craftspeople to tell us why they bothered doing handcraft in the face of ruthlessly efficient mass manufacturing.

An article in The Sydney Morning Herald of October 31, 1935 about a Society of Arts and Crafts exhibition could have, with minor changes, been written today in answer.

'We ask ourselves' it begins 'why it is that they (our members) go to infinite pains to weave cloth by hand, to make pottery by hand, to print material by handblocks

when they could surely buy everything that is needed from a shop?

'The reason lies in the fact that deep down in human nature there is an urge to make things, to work diligently at the creation of an object because of the pleasure that the work gives in itself ...'

'It is a pleasure to walk round such an exhibition and see what artistry and human hands are still able to do. It serves to remind us that we are not mere robots of a mechanical age, but living, individual people still.'

Amen.

The decline of handcrafted domestic ware

I am a dying breed - I love making domestic ware.

Not many people today appreciate the joy and beauty of handmade domestic vessels - the wonderful sensuality of putting a hand thrown cup to one's lips. The colours and textures cannot be copied in mass produced objects. Incredibly cheap domestic ware in large chain stores (sometimes a whole set costs less than a single piece from a studio potter) make it very hard for the potter to compete.

I understand this, but a few hand crafted pieces in the home would greatly enhance any meal.

I have a set of Heidi Francis' lunch plates, square, green crackle, tough as old boots and

used several times a week. They always bring me joy. When friends come to dinner a Barbara Webster platter is always somewhere on the table, the soft brown wood-fired surface enhances any food.

Have you poured milk from a Liz Hardy milk jug? Heaven! And if you want Chinese food to taste its best, serve it in a Gillian Dodds bowl and eat it nestling the bowl in your hand.

At huge expense I bought a Lex Dixon set of dinner plates. They are incredible and since his death I treasure them even more.

I was overjoyed when I went to Tetsuyas restaurant - one of the best in the world - and two of the courses were served on Lex's



plates. Top chefs know that the serving plate is as important to the aesthetic as the food itself.

The handcrafted plate and mug suffer from the perception (which I reject) that the domestic potter is somehow a poor second to the sculptural 'ceramicist' and are consequently displayed somewhere at the back of the gallery.

In this game, display is so important and I dream of every gallery having a dining table at the front where dinner sets are brazenly displayed, with windows full of teasetts at enormous prices.

We potters who still love making these pieces must not lose heart - I haven't.

In May this year I have an exhibition in Shoalhaven Regional Art Gallery titled '**Domestica Fantastica**'

...wish me luck.





brushed with time

Exhibition of crafts in celebration of Chinese New Year, an event associated with City of Sydney, Year of the Rabbit 2011, with works by guest calligraphers from the Australian Society of Calligraphers Inc.

when 1 February to 27 February, 2011

where Craft NSW 104 George Street The Rocks Sydney 2000

p 9241 5825 **w** www.artsandcraftsnsw.com.au/exhibitions.htm



a start white ring-barked forest

An exhibition inspired by the third verse of Dorothea Mackellar's poem 'My Country'

when 1 March to 27 March, 2011

where Craft NSW 104 George Street The Rocks Sydney 2000

p 9241 5825 **w** www.artsandcraftsnsw.com.au/exhibitions.htm



tom moore: survey

Tom Moore is a tapestry artist who has spent many years perfecting his craft. This exhibition brings together a range of works that Tom has produced and acknowledges his skills and talents as an established weaver.

when 26 March to 7 May, 2011

where Tamworth Regional Gallery, NSW

w www.tamworthregionalgallery.com.au/exhibitions.php



core of my heart, my country

An exhibition inspired by the fourth verse of Dorothea Mackellar's poem 'My Country'

when 29 March to 17 April, 2011

where Craft NSW 104 George Street The Rocks Sydney 2000

p 9241 5825 **w** www.artsandcraftsnsw.com.au/exhibitions.htm



men at work and play

A 'men only' exhibition with, silver, basketry, timberwork, leather.

when 19 April to 15 May, 2011

where Craft NSW 104 George Street The Rocks Sydney 2000

p 9241 5825 **w** www.artsandcraftsnsw.com.au/exhibitions.htm



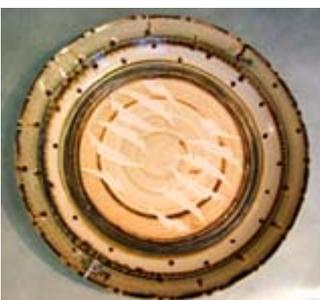
fibre alchemists book club

An exhibition by members of Fibre Alchemists of work inspired by their favourite books.

when 17 May to 29 May, 2011

where Craft NSW 104 George Street The Rocks Sydney 2000

p 9241 5825 **w** www.artsandcraftsnsw.com.au/exhibitions.htm



Domestica Fantastica: Wendy Lindsay and Pat Hayward

This exhibition celebrates the simple but profound beauty of the everyday, the divine in the domestic scene in acrylics and pastels, and the joy of handcrafted ceramic forms with organic additions.

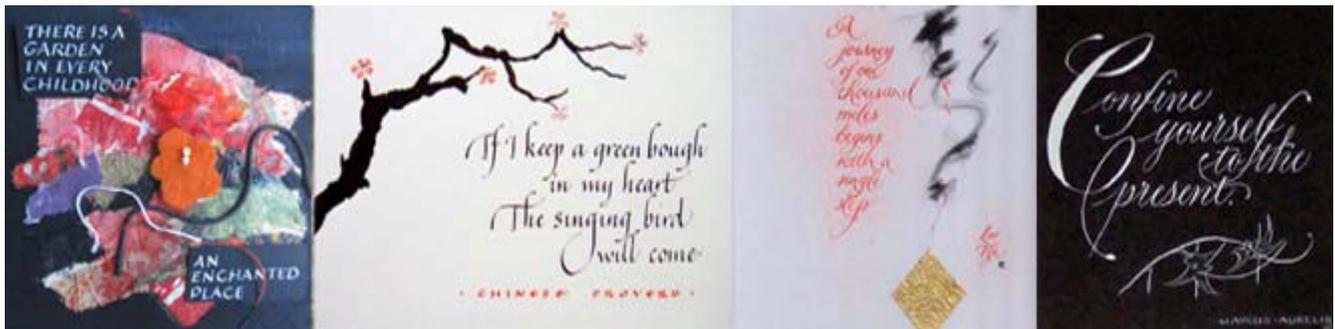
when 13 May to 8 June, 2011

where Shoalhaven City Arts Centre

p 02 4422 0648 **w** www.shoalhavenartscentre.com.au/may11.html

TUITION

Tutor	Craft	Email	Workshop information
Pam de Groot	Felting, beginner - advanced	pamdegroot.fibre@gmail.com	Please contact tutor direct
Jenny Hopper	Nuno felting and dyeing, beginner - advanced	jennyhopper@tsn.cc	Please contact tutor direct
Jude Skeers	Hand knitting - hats moebius etc	judeskeers@hotmail.com	Please book via website
Penel Bigg	Flamework beadmaking; Beadweaving with seed beads	firebird@gmail.com	Please contact the tutor direct
Sandra Shaw	Screenprinting workshops	sandra.shaw2@bigpond.com	Please contact the tutor direct
Val Aked	Silverwork classes	9975 3734	Please contact the tutor direct
Carolyn Delzoppo	Cloisonne enamel	see website for information	www.carolyndelzoppo.com.au
Helen Beale	Basketry	helen@helenbeale.com	Please contact the tutor direct



Elaine Witton 'Enchanted Garden', **Linda Upfold** 'The Green Bough', **Heather Courtis** 'A Single Step', **Susan Tyler** 'Confine Yourself'
Australian Society of Calligraphers, from Brushed with Time

CRAFT WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS IN NSW

7th annual orange forum 2011

The 7th TAFTA Forum in Orange NSW will be held at Kinross-Wolaroi School. Enjoy this unique opportunity to gather with likeminded people including the usual strong mix of overseas and Australian tutors, together with students and suppliers in a creatively charged atmosphere that allows for in-depth learning along with a celebration of the full spectrum of the textile arts.

when: 10 - 16 April 2011

where: Kinross-Wolaroi School, Orange NSW

further info: (07) 3300.6491 [TAFTA Orange forum 2011](#)

australian cotton fibre expo 2011

The Acquisitive Prize is \$2500. In addition there is a First Prize in each of 8 sections worth \$750 each and a Students' Section and a Mayor's Award of \$750 (for Narrabri Shire Residents only). Enquiries to Lexie Killen Phone (02) 6792.4859. Entries close 25 February 2011.

when: 6 - 15 May 2011

where: The Crossing Theatre, Narrabri NSW

further info: 02 6792 4859 [australian cotton fibre expo, narrabri](#)

quilting: designing with strips

From a set of strips sewn together you can design and create your own masterpiece. The quilt could be a Bargello, Circles from Strips or Take 6. All quilts are made by simple strip piecing patchwork technique that can be used to create exciting and spectacular designs. Some preparation is required prior to the workshop. A great workshop, which is easier than it, looks. Suitable for all levels.

when: 11 February 2011

where: Boronia Park Uniting Church: 93A Pittwater Road, Hunters Hill NSW

further info: [workshops Quilters Guild](#)

calligraphy: the spencerian hand

These two workshops will be an introduction to the Spencerian script for both beginners and those who wish to refine their hand.

when: 19 February and 19 March 2011

where: Primrose Park Art and Craft Centre, Cremorne NSW

further info: [workshops Australian Society of Calligraphers](#)

papermaking: weekly courses

This intensive course, which will run for one day a week over four weeks, will give you the skills to create a range of papers from recycled materials to beautiful plant fibre papers for use in stationers, cards, books, printmaking and 2D and 3D artworks.

when: 3, 10, 17, 24 March 2011

where: Primrose Park Art and Craft Centre, Matora Lane, Cremorne NSW

further info: 02 9380 5449 [workshops Primrose Paperworks](#)

bookbinding: engineered book structures

These book structures are held together by woven or interlocking bindings. The books, though small, are ideal artist's books for incorporating text and image. With a little imagination the intricate and decorative binding strips can become part of the overall design. The course will run over two Saturdays starting with the comparatively straightforward and moving to the more complex structures.

when: 26 February and 12 March 2011

where: Primrose Park Art and Craft Centre, Matora Lane, Cremorne NSW

further info: 02 9380 5449 [workshops Primrose Paperworks](#)

bookbinding: boxes and books, constructions around the found object

Over In this three day intensive workshop students will learn the basics of box construction and a variety of book forms. The selection of materials and forms will be in support of each one's collected piece or pieces that need a special place to reside. False floors, hidden drawers, shrines and niches are all possible in this class that builds a home and journal for the small objects that have meaning beyond their intended purpose.

when: 8 - 10 April 2011

where: Primrose Park Art and Craft Centre, Matora Lane, Cremorne NSW

further info: 02 9380 5449 [workshops Primrose Paperworks](#)

leathercraft: beginners and learners workshop

Learn foundation skills from experienced leatherworkers. A number of long-term Guild members will explain and demonstrate different types of leathercraft skills, including carving, plaiting, stitching, etc.

when: 26 - 27 February 2011

where: Epping Creative Centre, Dence Park, Epping NSW

further info: 02 4958 8720 [workshops Leather Workers Guild of NSW](#)

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We welcome material you wish to submit for publication and appreciate your feedback, comments and suggestions. Please email:
newsletter@artsandcraftsnsw.com.au

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